

Message Text

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51

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00 SAB-01

SAJ-01 SAM-01 SCS-03 SCA-01 AID-05 SCCT-01 SY-05

USSS-00 IO-10 /097 W

----- 039983

O 161700Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3913

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAHINGER GER IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4894

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: BEIRUT SITREP - 1500Z

REF: BEIRUT 4860

1. WORD IS NOW REACHING US FROM NUMBER OF SOURCES, OFFICIAL
AND OTHERWISE, THAT ARAB LEAGUE SYG RIAD WHO DID NOT RPT NOT
LEAVE BEIRUT AS ANTICIPATED REFTTEL, HOPES TRY AGAIN TO HAVE
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CEASEFIRE AND STANDDOWN BY PHALANGISTS AND PALESTINIANS COME

INTO EFFECT AS OF 1500Z APR 16 OR AT LEAST PRIOR TO NIGHTFALL. AT THIS TIME AND FOR APPROX LAST TWO HOURS, SOUNDS OF FIRING AND EXPLOSIONS HAVE BEEN FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. DESPITE SCATTERED REPORTS OF CLASHES AND EXPLOSIONS IN SOME AREAS, WE BELIEVE GENERAL SITUATION SOMEWHAT CALMER BUT STILL TENSE. WHETHER PRESENT LULL IS PRELUDE TO EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE OR, AS TWO INFORMANTS HAVE SUGGESTED, RESULT OF AMMUNITION SHORTAGE AND/OR FATIGUE ON BOTH SIDES REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

2. IT APPEARS THAT PRIOR TO PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL'S HANDING OVER LAST NIGHT OF TWO PHALANGISTS TO GOL OFFICIALS (REFTEL, PARA 2), SUBSIDIARY ACCORD WAS WORKED OUT, POSSIBLY BY IMAM MUSA SADR, FOR EXCHANGE OF HOSTAGES HELD BY BOTH SIDES. PALESTINIANS ALLEGEDLY RELEASED FOUR PHALANGISTS WHO WERE HELD IN SABRA CAMP AND PHALANGISTS TURNED OVER ABOUT DOZEN NON-LEBANESE (PALESTINIANS, IRAQIS, SYRIANS AND POSSIBLY LIBYANS).

3. WHILE EFFORTS OF NON-CABINET LEBANESE POLITICIANS APPEAR BE BENT TOWARD MAKING CEASEFIRE WORK, WE CONTINUE RECEIVE NUMEROUS REPORTS OF DISSENTION AND DISINTEGRATION WITHIN CABINET. ABOUT 40 DEPUTIES, INCLUDING SOME MINISTERS, FINALLY TURNED UP FOR RUMP PARLIAMENT SESSION (REFTEL, PARA 6), ISSUED STATEMENT CALLING ON ALL PARTIES TO COMPOSE DIFFERENCES PEACEFULLY AND DECLARED PARLIAMENTARY GROUP WOULD RESUME SESSION TO MONITOR SITUATION AT 0800Z ON APR 17. PM SOLH MADE PILGRIMAGE ABOUT 1000Z TO CONFER WITH PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND WAS DIRECTED TO GO IMMEDIATELY TO SEE CHAMOUN, WHO REPORTEDLY SEETHING IN WAKE OF BOMBING HIS VERDUN STREET HOLDINGS AND FAILURE OF SOLH TO CALL IN ARMY. WE GATHER PARLIAMENTARIANS MAINLY DIRECTED THEIR ANGER AGAINST SOLH FOR SAME REASON.

4. MAIN ACTORS IN CURRENT EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT CEASEFIRE NOW REPORTEDLY RIAD, IMAM MUSA SADR AND RAYMOND EDDE, WHO RETURNED FROM ABROAD YESTERDAY. WHILE WILLINGNESS OF 'ARAFAT AND QTE MODERATE UNQTE PALESTINIANS TO ACCEPT TRUCE REPORTEDLY NOT IN QUESTION BY MEDIATORS, WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY ONE SOURCE THAT MINHOUSING MICHEL SASSINE HAS BEEN DISPATCHED TO CONTACT GEMAYEL TO DETERMINE IF HIS AGREEMENT STILL STANDS. AIR OF CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL EXPECTANCY HANGS OVER CITY AS DUSK BEGINS. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. ALL AMCITS SAFE ACCORDING OUR INFORMATION. WE CONTINUE HEAR WILD RUMORS OF AMCIT CASUALTIES, INCLUDING VARIOUS MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF, BUT ARE ASSURING INQUIRING CORRESPONDENTS THAT RUMORS UNFOUNDED. ELECTRICITY CUTS IN SOME AREAS OF BEIRUT (SINN AL FIL AND ENVIRONS) CAUSING INCONVENIENCE AND IT STILL UNSAFE TO VENTURE INTO STREETS IN MOST NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT REAL HARDSHIPS FOR FOREIGN COMMUNITY HAVE NOT THUS FAR DEVELOPED.

AIRPORT CONTINUES OPERATIONS WITH NO RPT NO CHANGE IN FUEL STATUS.

6. AFTER ABOVE WRITTEN, PM SOLH APPEARED AT ABOUT 1510Z ON
LEBANESE TV (WHICH DOES NOT NORMALLY BEGIN BROADCASTING BEFORE
1600Z) AND PRESUMABLY RADIO AS WELL TO ANNOUNCE CEASEFIRE
AGREEMENT REACHED AND THAT ALL ARMED CIVILIANS SHOULD IMMEDIATELY
CLEAR STREETS SINCE POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES WOULD BEGIN TO
ENFORCE STANDDOWN.
GODLEY

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